
My Mix Of Privileges And Oppressed Identities

Different perspectives

1. Oppressed and being in position of power serving whites who are also in position of power

As a social worker and holding a position of power while serving my clients, I'm aware of how me being black/visible minority, immigrant with an accent will not only affect my approach with clients (i. e. whites who also hold positions of power) but also how they view me and frame my presence.

2. Privileged serving oppressed perspective

At the same time, my able bodied, heterosexual status and young can often prevent me from recognizing the daily challenges that people with disabilities, minority sexual orientation status and aged population face.

3. Oppressed and serving oppressed

Being a woman and black, low income-> (intersecting issues) I can relate to the obstacles indigenous/women of colour face, gender-non conforming, visracialized men in justice system and over representation of indigenous/black children in the child welfare system and broken families, black people with mental illness (i. e Andrew Loku shooting-case example of policing mental illness on blacks and shooting of Jermaine Carby as an example of systemic police brutality on black/racialized bodies) who are continually targeted and victimized while their suffering is marginalized, erased and rendered invisible->issues taken up by black lives matter, haven't heard of social workers taking up the issue.

As a social worker, I have the responsibility to constantly examine and reflect on the frameworks that inform my practice so I do not unintentionally reproduce/ reinforce systemic oppression against marginalize populations while I try to help them. To prevent this, learning from history and reflecting on current contemporary issues and in practice is vital in order to challenge systemic practices that still persist in covert forms. In so doing, we dismantle structural oppression and avoid similar mistakes that continue to target and marginalize people of colour by centering anti-racist/anti-oppression approach in practice.

The shooting of Andrew Loku, a black Sudanese immigrant living in Toronto with mental illness is a call to position social workers & not the police as first responders where there is mental health crisisIt is ironic that social work profession crowns itself as being socially conscious and social justice, yet does not recruit professionals reflective of the communities they serve. For example, white social workers have played an active role in placing black/indigenous children in white foster homes that are not cultural sensitive. This is a colonial practice of taking children away from their homes to disconnect them from their cultures, erase their history and confuse

their identity. Social work profession needs to be more inclusive in promoting cultural competence and recruiting from a diverse pool of workers of different social backgrounds to reflect on communities they serve.

Mix of Oppressed and Privileged at the Same Time Perspective

Being a Canadian citizen and enjoying privileges that come with this status, I might not be aware of challenges facing new immigrant's due to changing policies but being a newcomer immigrant some years back and also a first-generation immigrant I am aware and understand the challenges many newcomer /first generation immigrants face while settling, adapting to a new culture while also trying to figure out the landscape and location in their new environment.

Living in a western society, I'm not only Privileged to identify as a Christian/western educated but also marginalized. Although I'm a non-practising, my Christian values, consciously or unconsciously, could also be oppressing to non-Christian e. g. Muslims who are viewed as 'other' in a western society. I can also identify with the challenges other marginalized/visible/ethnic minority groups who have had their cultures, traditional heritage, ways of knowing and religion erased due to colonialism/colonial violence that has promoted Christianity/western knowledge as superior and deemed others inferior and as result, have lost/ have diluted identities, erasure of histories and lost touch with culture, religion, language. Therefore, unable to gain or have limited access to traditional ways of knowledge/education, culture etc which are all necessary for identity, decolonizing, trauma healing and spirituality. This mix of identity having privileged and also oppressed me has affected my worldview in that, since I can no longer be fully African and fully Christian and partially practising both depending on the environment I find myself in, I have left my door open to other values, forms of knowledge, cultures to compliment the values I already have from both sides rather than seeing them as threats to what I already have. This not only helps me adopting quickly in the environment I find myself in but also helped me understand other people's worldviews that are different from mine from their own perspective.

My mix of privileges and oppressed identities not only affect my pedagogical choices/approach but also how others view me or experience my presence.